Minutes of the

Meeting of the Executive Committee

of the

World Council of Churches

23 - 24 August 2002

Meeting held in

Geneva, Switzerland

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World Council of Churches

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

held in Geneva, Switzerland

23-24 August 2002

1. OPENING ACTIONS

1.1 Worship

Morning worship took place in the Chapel of the Ecumenical Centre. Planned by a group of staff, worship was led on 23 August by Rev. Dr Clifton Kirkpatrick and on 24 August by Ms Donnalie Edwards-Cabey.

1.2 Call to Order and Welcome

The Moderator, His Holiness Aram I, called the meeting to order at 9.00 hrs on Friday 23 August 2002. After welcoming members to Geneva, he referred to the meditation in the chapel led by Dr Kirkpatrick, emphasizing the importance of the concept of the Ecumenical Centre as the "house" where all should feel at home. This "house" character of the World Council of Churches should be developed further, he believed, for in spite of our differences we are together under one roof in this house which is our house. We are here to strengthen this house and strengthen our fellowship in this house.

1.3 Roll Call

The General Secretary called the roll of members present. He introduced his new Assistant, Rev. Sabine Udodesku, and welcomed Rev. Gordon How (the local organizer for the Vancouver Assembly in 1983), who had recently visited possible sites for the Ninth Assembly.

Apologies for absence had been received from Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky, Ms Jana Krajciriková, Rev. Dr Ilaitia Sevati Tuwere, and Bishop McKinley Young.

The following substitutes were approved: Bishop Dr Rolf Koppe for Bishop Dr Wolfgang Huber who had resigned; Metr. Gennadios of Sassima for Rev. Dr Georges Tsetsis, who had also resigned; and Dr Peter Bouteneff for Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky. Replacements for those who had resigned would be appointed at the first session of the Central Committee.

1.4 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held in Nyborg Strand, Denmark, 19-22 February 2002, were approved subject to the following amendments:

- A revised text had been prepared replacing some paragraphs on page 38 of the Minutes, under the report of the Finance Sub-committee. The General Secretary explained that it was a question of changes in nuance which seemed important to note for audit purposes. The revised text, in italics, is as follows:

- "K. Raiser explained the problems of cash flow, the impossibility of drawing on the investment portfolio. In view of this the proposal is to get liquidity from another part of the WCC's assets. Many investments were restricted to particular programmes.
- *R. Christeler confirmed that this was the case. If General Fund investment holdings were considered net of loans at the end of 2001, then in total there had been a decrease in investments of 30% since 2000. At the year end 2001, the General Fund investments covered Programme Funds with a margin of CHF 500,000 in surplus. Further withdrawal from investments to meet general cash flow needs seemed no longer advisable. It would therefore be necessary to put prime assets to work. While it might be agreed that the approach might not be totally orthodox, if there were a clear plan to reimburse from future surpluses, then it would be a responsible decision. Earliest repayments would be made in 2003, and not within financial year 2002.*
- A. Gadegaard said the Finance Sub-Committee had discussed the prudence of taking out a mortgage but felt there was no alternative. Investments are restricted to endowment funds and designated programmes.
- C. Karagdag, as a member of the Finance Sub-Committee, wanted to register a dissenting opinion about staff reductions. She agreed that the circumstances were dire and that reductions were inevitable, but would have preferred greater latitude on when staff reductions should be completed and under no circumstances would she want such a drastic measure to affect the integrity

and effectiveness of the WCC to respond to the minimum needs of the constituency.

- *R. Christeler wished to signal that the budget 2002 included no provision for restructuring costs which might be incurred relating to any staff reductions which might be agreed upon within the financial year. It was not possible to estimate this amount. Any amount concerned would therefore be treated as an extraordinary unbudgeted cost, as had been the case for the early retirement package in 2001. This point should be noted.*
- The Moderator noted disagreements within the Executive Committee concerning the plan for staff reductions. The Executive Committee **agreed** that this should be a topic of further conversation by telephone and e-mail among the Officers and the WCC's finance officers.
- *The draft activities budget 2002 includes a note concerning an anticipated charge of CHF 400,000 to the General Reserve. If the specific activities concerned did record deficit results of this amount at the end of 2002, then in accordance with accounting standards, the amount would require to be charged against the General Reserves. There would be discussions with partners to determine whether any Programme Funds might be reassigned to cover the activities concerned.*

R. Christeler said that, to avoid further unclarity, it must be understood that the intentions of the recommendations were (1) to plan to reduce non-binding non-staff costs; (2) separately and in addition, to reduce staff costs by 7-10%. The methodology and approach would be to have a plan by 30 June 2002 latest so that the effects could be felt in 2003. A. Gadegaard made a slight correction to this: the plan should be ready to be presented in April so that it could be implemented by 30 June."

- On page 53, the date of the closing of the meeting should be Friday, 22 February 2002, (not September).
- On page 56, list of participants, Libby Visinand had taken the notes of the meeting and the minutes were edited by Theodore Gill.

1.5 Adoption of Agenda

The General Secretary presented the Agenda for the meeting, noting that the main task of the meeting was to prepare for Central Committee; two sessions would be devoted to meetings of Sub-committees. The agenda was approved.

Members would have received an invitation to attend the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the Faith and Order Conference in Lausanne in 1927 which were to take place in Lausanne on Sunday 25th August.

2. REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Dr Raiser explained that his report contained three main elements: firstly, an attempt to link this meeting of the Central Committee with the previous one in Potsdam in January 2001, and to reflect on the significant developments that had taken place since then.

Secondly, he would attempt to introduce Central Committee to the main focus of reflection at this meeting, namely the emphasis on "Being Church", and the final report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC.

Thirdly, he would attempt to take a wider look at the ecumenical situation, developing reflections on the need to reconsider the organizational and institutional arrangements in the ecumenical movement as we move further into the 21st century. While we were obliged to consider the continuing viability of the WCC, it had to be acknowledged that this kind of challenge was also facing the majority of ecumenical bodies. Therefore the governing bodies of the WCC must take up the task of ensuring an inner coherence of the ecumenical movement. Some reflection must be given to this wider context of our vocation to see how the Council could cooperate with and assist its partner organizations in finding a way to develop a new ecumenical configuration for the 21st century.

Dr Raiser said that, leaving aside institutional matters this time, he would highlight the primary concerns that had been on the agenda of staff since Nyborg. The financial situation had continued to occupy attention and members of the Executive had been consulted about a recommendation that had not been decided upon in Nyborg; this had however been confirmed by mail vote and staff had tried to implement the reduction of expenditure by 10% - 7%, to be effective in January 2003.

Alongside these specific financial considerations, staff had spent time responding to the request by the Programme Committee for an evaluation of the work done in the period since the Harare Assembly. This process had required several phases: internal evaluation; constituency-related evaluation; and three external evaluations.

The Programme Committee was studying the evaluation report and would report back to Central Committee.

The general secretary pointed out that evaluation was not an end in itself but was meant to provide critical insights for developing plans for the future. Therefore the evaluation procedure was related to the need to project programme and plans for activities for the second period up to the next assembly. Having reached the mid-term point between assemblies, 2003-2005 was the period for planning in financial terms as set out in the "blue book" to be presented to Central Committee.

The third major focus was the final phase of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation. Appointed by Central Committee in 1999, it had held its concluding plenary session in Finland in May/June 2002 and its final report would be presented to the Central Committee. This had required intensive work on the part of the small staff group as well as Communication colleagues.

With regard to activities, Dr Raiser reported that, with a group of staff colleagues, he had visited member churches in East Africa and the Horn of Africa, including North and South Sudan; Kenya and Tanzania; Ethiopia and Eritrea. They had engaged in intensive conversations with leaders of member churches, and with civic and political leaders. Since then, there seemed to be some grounds for hope that there was a move towards peace and reconciliation in Sudan, and Central Committee would have the opportunity to record its solidarity for such a move. Although the border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea was officially over, the climate of mistrust between the two countries remained, so the Council must redouble its efforts to become an instrument to help towards reconciliation and peace.

In discussion, appreciation was expressed for the efforts being made towards peace, particularly in Sudan. Reference was made to the earlier efforts of the WCC and the AACC which had been instrumental in bringing about a cease fire in 1972 - this had lasted for eleven years, only to be renounced by the Khartoum government, and ever since war had ravaged the south of the country. There were still great expectations that the WCC may again perform such a miracle, but it was proving even more difficult than before to reach a negotiated settlement.

Secondly, mention was made of church-related agencies for development and humanitarian assistance which had moved to the fore on the ecumenical scene. The WCC was trying to keep in touch with these partners and to keep them in

touch with each other through various groupings including Action by Churches Together and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance. Dr Raiser pointed out that the agencies were church-related and understood themselves to be part of what it means to be church; they also saw themselves as partners in the global ecumenical movement, especially in the humanitarian field. Yet at the same time they claimed a distinct and separate visibility, and in some cases their presence had had an enormous effect on ecumenical organizations in the Southern Hemisphere due to their large offices and far greater presence than the WCC could ever expect to have. The WCC Roundtable had become a space for negotiation and was accepted as a forum in which agency representatives were themselves involved rather than as a place for discussing material support for WCC activities.

3. REPORT OF THE MODERATOR OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

The Moderator began by referring to the Harare Assembly and the concentration on the theme of globalization. He believed we should not ignore the ecclesiological dimension but that this should become a major focus in our common attempt to respond responsibly to globalization. Therefore in his report he would aim to start ecclesiological reflections along these lines.

Following Harare, four foci were identified as the major agenda items for the Council's work, including Being Church; Witness and Service in the context of a globalized world; and the Nature and Purpose of the Church – a Faith & Order study to be taken up during this meeting of Central Committee. These constituted the framework in which he had tried to develop ideas and perspectives pertaining to the concept of what it means to be church in the context of the globalizing world.

We cannot deny globalization but should adopt an attitude of critical realism, and we have to respond to globalization in a faith perspective. The church should enter a critical debate on the subject. There was strong emphasis on the fact that being church cannot be separated from becoming church. The nature and mission of the Church, being the church, becoming the church – these were very much together. In responding to globalization he had developed that response in the framework of three aspects of being church: catholicity, ecumenicity and eschatology. The church could respond to these three realities in the life of the church but at the same time they were reality and vision, history and eschatology. These notions would be developed in the course of his paper.

In the final section the Moderator said he would emphasize the importance of ecclesiology and conciliarity which he believed should become a major item on the agenda of Faith and Order and of the WCC.

A number of appreciative remarks were made, and the Moderator expressed his thanks for these.

4. PREPARATION FOR THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

The General Secretary introduced the draft agenda and timetable for the forthcoming meeting of Central Committee. On Monday morning at the Opening Worship, the preacher would be Präses Kock, moderator of the Council of the EKD.

The Small Group meetings were intended to provide opportunity for informal encounters and sharing of insights and proposals which otherwise would not reach the committee process.

5. REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMISSION ON ORTHODOX PARTICIPATION IN THE WCC

The general secretary explained that the presentation of the Report of the Special Commission to the Central Committee was planned to open with an introduction by the co-moderators, Metr. Chrysostomos and Bishop Koppe, followed by a panel discussion with four members of the Commission who would be invited to reflect in personal terms on their experience of being part of the Special Commission. This would be followed by plenary discussion. The Executive would take some time in the Policy sub-committee to look at the report of the Special Commission and its recommendations, in order to anticipate any points that may need particular attention.

6. PRESENTATION ON FINANCES

A presentation on the Council's Finances with slides and diagrams was introduced by Mr Robert Christeler.

At the Executive Committee meeting in February 2002, preliminary unaudited figures for 2001 had been available only. The final audited financial statements for 2001 report an operating deficit of approximately CHF 6 million and a Programme Fund drawdown of CHF 5 million. The Programme Funds were balances granted by partners in prior years and designated for expenditure on programmatic activities. Their drawdown was good practice, in that partners also monitored use of such balances before deciding upon the grant to be made for the following year.

There were three principal reasons for the increase in operating deficit to CHF 6 million in comparison with the approved budgeted deficit of CHF 1.6 million. More than half of the operating deficit was directly related to the poor performance of the general investment portfolio. Secondly, operating contributions had been approximately CHF 1 million lower than budgeted; and finally, there had been unbudgeted early retirement expenses of CHF 0.9 million.

When the draft budget for 2002 was reviewed by the Executive Committee in February 2002, it had been required that there be a 10% reduction in non-contractual expenses, to be effective in the year 2002. A second recommendation was that there be a 7-10% reduction in staff costs, to be effective in 2003. The budget for 2002 had been approved subject to implementation of these measures by staff.

The moderator and vice-moderator of the Finance Committee met in Geneva in April 2002 with the Core Group of the Programme Committee. The cost reduction measures achieved were presented, and the revised budget for 2002 approved with a planned operating deficit of CHF 0.9 million and a Programme Fund drawdown of CHF 4.6 million.

The General Secretary pointed out that most of what was termed "support costs" were staff-related costs. He affirmed the distinction between programmes and activities, noting that the area where further reductions in costs could be made was under activities. Most of the costs were fixed and could be reduced only if staff costs were further reduced.

Mr Christeler noted that if, as a result of budgetary planning for 2003, any staff redundancy costs payable in 2003 be foreseeable at present or before finalization of the 2002 financial accounts, such costs would require to be reflected in the accounts in 2002. There was a degree of uncertainty regarding possible future

staff costs reductions, since in Nyborg the Executive Committee had asked staff to work towards a balanced budget in 2003.

Dr Raiser said that the major part of the staff reductions decided upon as part of the 2002 budget process would indeed become effective in 2003; expected savings in 2003 were estimated at 7.2% compared with the 2002 approved budget. It was not anticipated that these staff reductions implied any redundancy or early retirement costs, other than those for which provision had been made in the financial accounts of 2001.

Ms Minezac, Human Resources Director, explained that the offer with regard to early retirement had been made in 2001 when a considerable number of people accepted the package. Although payable at intervals throughout 2002, the estimated expenses of over CHF 900,000 had been taken into account in 2001. In 2002, two further staff members had been added under the same package terms, with an estimated cost of CHF 155,000. It was anticipated that the provision made in 2001 would be sufficient to cover this expense, and there would thus be no further expense to be taken into account in 2002 related to the early retirement package. In relation to the further staff reductions made, Ms Minezac informed the Executive Committee that these had been arrived at by not replacing administrative assistants who left the Council, or by reduction in working hours for certain positions.

Mr Christeler affirmed that staff reductions were carried out according to local Swiss regulations.

Mid-Year results 2002: Income had again been adversely affected by poor investment results. June results indicated an operating deficit of CHF 1.9 million, as a direct result of foreign exchange and investment losses of CHF 1.8 million. It had now been forecast that contribution income might be expected to be CHF 1.6 million less than budgeted. As a result, an additional effort would be made to reduce costs in 2002. The expectation was that costs and transfers would be reduced by CHF 2.7 million.

With regard to **Investments**, Mr Christeler said this would be discussed in the Finance Sub-committee. The results for July were bad, but slightly better for August. Fortunately, defensive measures had been taken last year, but even with a more conservative reconstructed portfolio, there was still risk of loss. The latest figures would be made available for the Central Committee.

The **2003 Budget** would not be presented to this meeting of Central Committee for approval; rather, approval for the framework would be requested. The Income Monitoring and Development team would be closely involved with Financial Controllers in future budget control, methodology and process.

Mr Christeler said that in the past, WCC activities/programmes were not of equal attraction to partners, with the result that some were well-funded, but others less so. This situation was no longer viable. He went on to explain that 16 core programmes of equal priority had been defined, each of which should receive income to balance its planned budgeted expenditure. This meant that funding would be requested by the Council at the level of these 16 programmes, separately from other programmes which come under the Council's activities – i.e. emerging challenges which do not have equal priority. It was felt that it was not viable to have constantly changing programmes as this did not allow for a reliable base on which to base plans for the following year.

A 3-year programme and financial plan had been drawn up, to establish a sufficiently clear link between financial and programme planning.

Framework for 2003 budget: The framework proposed that there would be a draw down on fund balances of CHF 3.9 million. No further decrease in general reserves was planned for 2003. Discussion would take place in the Finance Committee and Central Committee.

7. PUBLIC ISSUES

Rev. Dwain Epps explained that the Executive Committee would be asked to agree on the submission to Central Committee of the following proposed actions on Public Issues: a statement on South Asia; a draft minute on Sudan; a draft statement on violence in Colombia; the situation in the Holy Land; military action against Iraq; and a minute regarding 11 September and its aftermath. It was proposed that the Executive forward these to Central Committee for adoption. The rationale for this was:

1. The statement on South Asia had come in relation to the fact that this meeting of Central Committee would have a plenary session focusing on Asia. It was a long time since the Council had taken any action on South Asia, so it was proposed that an extensive analysis be made of the present dangerous situation, particularly

in relation to the conflict between India and Pakistan, and in view of the potential nuclear dimension. There had been a debate by CCIA on 6 June 2002 and further consideration would be given to the matter during the coming days.

2. Sudan: The Central Committee meeting in Potsdam approved an action on Sudan, but since then there had been an agreement on the framework of a new peace process. It was important to mark this event, especially in view of the General Secretary's visit in July. This was a significant step forward and was welcomed by the churches.

3. Colombia: The Central Committee in 2001 had discussed the "Colombia Plan" for a military response in which the US and Colombia had engaged at the urging of the US. Since debating that statement the situation had become significantly worse, with violence at a very high level; the new government had shelved efforts to obtain a negotiated solution with the armed resistance, and had decided to pursue a military victory, while US policy had expanded from Plan Colombia to the Andean initiative. It was therefore important for the Central Committee to address this question now.

4. The ecumenical responses to the situation in the Holy Land were more extensive than usual. There had been many important developments ecumenically since the minute agreed in 2001. The Executive Committee had taken significant actions which should be endorsed by Central Committee, as well as an initiative taken by the General Secretary and staff to implement the decisions since the February 2002 meeting of the Executive Committee.

5. Military action against Iraq: Given the Council's long history with regard to the situation in the Gulf, it was necessary to re-state its earlier decisions in light of the new conflicts, in the hope that it would be possible to divert the US from its stated desire to take military action against Iraq.

6. Regarding September 11 and its aftermath, the Executive had been in session when the event took place. It was important for the Central Committee to take note of the work done in a minute (not a statement), to reiterate and indicate concerns in some of the areas where the Executive had spoken in the past, to look at the situation in the USA and the response of the US churches.

The General Secretary affirmed that there was no intention to propose any statements from this Executive, but in view of the substantial volume of material

it would be helpful to go through the various texts noting any elements that ought to be watched.

The Moderator raised the question of including Biblical quotations in statements. Mr Epps responded that these had been used in the past, but there was a desire to develop the use of the Council's voice on issues of international political concern in a way that has a pastoral and Christian content to it that gives more evidence of the nature of the body that is speaking.

Regarding the process, Mr Epps pointed out that normally there would not have been a draft statement but a background paper, and the drafts would be worked on by the Public Issues Committee (PIC). But it was felt that the issues were so clear that broad agreement was needed as early as possible by Central Committee. The General Secretary in his introduction would say that the Executive had agreed to propose that the Central Committee take action on the six points mentioned above, indicating that the Executive would be submitting drafts to the PIC.

It was agreed by common consent that these six items go to the Central Committee for action.

8. REPORT OF THE MEMBERSHIP STUDY GROUP

The Membership Study Group was constituted by, and was responsible to, the Executive Committee of the WCC at its meeting in January 2001 in response to issues raised in the ongoing work of the WCC and also to issues raised during the work of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC.

The Membership Study report (see Appendix III of these minutes) was introduced by Mr Huibert van Beek, who drew attention to the proposed recommendations (Section D of the report). These included:

- a set of theological criteria for membership;
- a proposal to eliminate the present category of "associate membership", and to introduce a new category of "churches in association with the WCC";
- that new member churches be received at Central Committee meetings rather than at the Assembly;
- a group of recommendations proposing groupings of churches for the purpose of representation and participation.

Many of the recommendations would require a change in the Rules of the WCC.

It was suggested that the proposals on groupings of churches be considered again mid-term between the 9th and 10th assemblies since there were a number of new things which would need to be looked at to see whether they were operating in a satisfactory way.

The recommendation on oversight of membership referred to some related issues arising out of the experience of the Council over the past fifty years, including the question of churches whose self-definition and practice had evolved in ways that may no longer be consistent with the Basis or criteria.

In response to a question by the Moderator, who felt the paragraph required more clarity, Mr van Beek pointed out that the Council had no history of examining the doctrines of its member churches. The Group had tried to say something between the two extremes. Dr Raiser felt it was a case where we should refrain from legislating, but rather where discernment must be exercised and, should action be required, it may have to be taken ad hoc. If there were a situation where there was evidence that a church seemed to be moving away from the affirmation of the Basis which it had agreed to when it became a member, that would have to be looked into.

Further, the general secretary believed that it may be helpful, through the Policy Reference Committee of Central Committee, to suggest that this Recommendation 6 be looked at again and the language clarified.

Regarding Recommendation 8 on the question of election of members of Central Committee, Dean Gadegaard hoped it could be possible to find a way for the election to take place before the assembly. The language in the paper was very general, leaving open the way elections were done at the assembly. How could this confusion be avoided?

A number of questions were asked for clarification on recommendation 8. Mr van Beek explained that the provisions were still general. There would need to be a period of consultation with the member churches to hear what their views might be on the proposed groupings. Regarding membership of Central Committee, many churches have seen the number of their members on the Committee decrease. The new factor was that we were asking the churches to agree on nominations among themselves; the Nominations Committee would deal with the question of balances.

Regarding the size of member churches, some of those which were founding members in 1948 are smaller than the limit later fixed at a minimum of 25,000 members. The MSG worked on the basis that the recommendations in its report would apply to new member churches.

Bishop Alfeyev commended the report and thanked members of the MSG for the work done: it was very thorough and comprehensive. He particularly stressed the importance of the newly proposed status of the churches in association with the WCC. His church would support the introduction of this status - which did not mean that it would withdraw into it - but because of the possibilities it provided for some churches which for one reason or another were not able to be member churches.

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Dr Raiser proposed that further discussion take place in the Policy Committee. At this stage the recommendations only had the status of being for consideration by the Executive Committee. The Policy Sub-Committee would need to provide the language through which these recommendations and the supporting reflection could be forwarded to Central Committee for information, but not for action.

9. POSSIBLE SITE FOR THE NINTH ASSEMBLY

The report was presented by Rev. Gordon How, who explained that his task had been to assess the facilities and services available in each of four possible sites, as well as the local support that could be counted on. He reminded the Executive that the last three assemblies had taken place in a university setting with accommodation facilities available close to a plenary hall and other meeting rooms. None of the possible sites for the 9th assembly had such accommodation but would require the use of hotels and consequent travel to and from the meeting site.

Another point was that past assemblies had taken place in an English-speaking setting, while the possible locations visited in relation to the 9th assembly had no such background, with the exception of Glasgow. This would create particular logistic challenges that would need to be addressed.

Mr How reported on the four possible sites he had visited: Nicosia, Cyprus; Glasgow, Scotland; Seoul, S. Korea; Porto Alegre, Brazil.

Nicosia: the primary challenge would be the daily commuting of the majority of participants from hotels in Larnaca to the site in Nicosia, which has good facilities but limited availability.

Glasgow: Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), who would host an assembly, had taken the position that if there were a strong proposal from Korea, Brazil or Cyprus, they would refrain from submitting an invitation. If that were not so, the churches would see it as a privilege to invite the assembly.

Seoul: There was no question about the desire of the Korean churches to host the assembly and the NCC would contribute considerably to the costs. The major problem was the lack of suitable space for use as a plenary hall and the two possible options would involve a great deal of reconstruction work.

Porto Alegre: There are a large number of immigrants from Germany who form the basis of the Lutheran Church of Brazil; it is also the centre for the Anglican and Methodist Churches of Brazil, leading to good ecumenical engagement. The convention centre built five years ago had the facilities necessary for an assembly.

In light of discussions with local church leaders, Mr How provided an assessment of the ecumenical and contextual matters related to each location. As to financial considerations, he had focused on the four most costly assembly expenditures: venue rental, accommodation, meals and travel. He had concluded that it would be feasible to have an assembly in each of the four locations visited, but in each case there would be considerable challenges of varying nature that would need to be addressed.

In discussion, Dr Lee drew attention to the fact that Korea had been the first to invite the WCC officially and the churches were very enthusiastic at the idea of hosting an assembly. He pointed out that there were two universities in Seoul which could provide accommodation, although it would be necessary to commute to the meeting site. However he felt that more important than the physical facilities was the ecumenical significance of having an assembly in Seoul, with its large Christian population. Korea was the only country in the world still suffering under the cold war era; the country remained divided although visits were now being arranged between families in North and South Korea.
The matter was passed to the Staffing and Nominations Sub-Committee for further consideration.

10. SEARCH COMMITTEE

The general secretary presented a paper which explained the procedures followed in 1987 and revised in 1992, as reaffirmed by the Executive Committee in September 2001. The procedures would be presented to Central Committee during the Opening Session on 26 August. Each member of Central Committee would receive a numbered ballot sheet to be filled out and returned within 24 hours. The Executive would meet on the evening of Wednesday 28 August to study the results of the ballot and add six additional names in such a way as to provide the necessary balances. A first meeting of the Search Committee would take place on Saturday 31 August to define procedures, agree on a timetable, and consider the job description.

The documents were passed to the Staffing and Nominations Sub-Committee for consideration.

11. REPORT OF STAFFING AND NOMINATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

In a closed session, Justice Adinyira reported on behalf of the Staffing and Nominations Sub-Committee.

11.1 Staffing Report

The Executive Committee **authorized** the General Secretary to proceed with the following appointment and contract extension, the legal obligations of the World Council of Churches to be binding only as from the actual signing by both parties of the corresponding contracts or contract extensions.

11.2 Appointment

Communication - Public Information Team:
Mr Juan Carlos **Michel** (Argentina, Evangelical Church of La Plata River) as **Media Relations Officer** for four years from 1 December 2002

11.3 Contract Extension

General Secretariat:

Mr Georges **Lemopoulos** (Turkey, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople [Eastern]) as **Deputy General Secretary** for a period of 5 years from 1 January 2004 (will complete 21.9 years), to be confirmed by the Central Committee.

It had been hoped to bring a number of further contract extensions for approval, but the general secretary reported that these required further discussion. It had not been possible to carry out the usual detailed appraisal in every case due to pressure of work. Secondly, in view of the probable need to reduce staff further, it did not seem wise at this stage to recommend extensions which would bind the WCC for three years from 2004. He therefore asked that the Executive Committee follow the usual practice and authorize the Officers to take action on staffing matters as required.
This was **agreed**.

11.4 Procedures for renewal of contracts for staff in roles L (Leadership) and P (Programme)

Justice Adinyira drew attention to the following point:

The present procedures need to be adjusted to comply with the prevailing Swiss labour legislation. According to Swiss law, a second renewal of a time-defined employment contract renders the contract indefinite. Contract renewals beyond seven years (4 + 3) therefore have to be decided after careful assessment and in awareness of the legal implications.

It was recommended that the periodic special appraisal every third year be maintained as an internal practice of the WCC. The General Secretary was responsible for reporting the results of the review to the Executive Committee, and for seeking the approval of the Executive Committee before initiating the eventual termination of a contract on the initiative of the WCC.

The Executive Committee **agreed** to this recommendation.

11.5 Departures

It was reported that the following staff members would leave the service of the World Council of Churches on the date indicated:

Bossey - Ecumenical Institute:
Prof. Dr Julio de Santa Ana (Uruguay, Evangelical Methodist Church in Uruguay), **Lecturer,** on 31 December 2002

Communication - Public Information Team:
Ms Karin Achtelstetter (Federal Republic of Germany, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria [EKD]), **Media Relations Officer/TC** on 4 August 2002.

Relations - Church and Ecumenical Relations:
Ms Jean Stromberg (USA, American Baptist Churches in the USA), **Director (US Office),** on 31 March 2003.

11.6 Information - Consultants

Appointment

It was reported that the following consultant was appointed by the General Secretary since the last Officers' meeting in June 2002:

Relations - Directorate:
Mr Hansulrich Gerber (Switzerland, Mennonite), **Consultant/DOV Coordinator** for a period of three years from 1 November 2002.

Contract Extension

It was reported that the following contract had been extended for one year

Relations - International Relations:
Dr Guillermo Kerber (Uruguay, Roman Catholic Church), Consultant, from 1 February 2003.

Officers' Meeting – June 2002

Vacancy

Relations - Directorate:
Consultant/DOV Coordinator for three years

Officers by postal vote

11.7 Appointment

Communication - Publication and Information Team:
Mr Yannick Provost (France, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople [Eastern]), **Publisher,** for four years from 1 July 2002 (will complete 3.11 years)

11.8 Membership of Central and Executive Committees, and Commissions

At its meetings of September 2001 and February 2002, the Executive Committee had been informed of several resignations from the Central Committee. Justice Adinyira drew attention to the list of proposed replacements which had been considered by the Sub-committee. The Executive Committee, acting as Nominations Committee for the Central Committee, **agreed** to recommend that these be presented to the Central Committee for approval during the Opening Session on 26 August.

The Executive Committee further recommended the nomination of Bishop McKinley Young as Moderator of the Finance Committee.

At the time of their resignation from Central Committee, Bishop Dr Wolfgang Huber and Very Rev. Dr Georges Tsetsis also resigned from the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee **agreed** to recommend that the Central Committee approve their replacement by Bishop Dr Rolf Koppe and Metr. Gennadios of Sassima respectively.

11.9 Membership of Advisory Groups

A number of names had been proposed after consultation with the churches. The Executive Committee **agreed** that these be brought to the Central Committee for approval.

11.10 Search Committee

The general secretary reported the recommendation of the Sub-committee that the Executive be authorized to appoint the moderator of the Search Committee. The Central Committee should therefore be requested to give such authority to the Executive Committee. This was **agreed**.

The following members of the Executive Committee were appointed as scrutineers: Metr. Gennadios of Sassima, Ms Carmencita Karagdag, and Rev. Dr Clifton Kirkpatrick.

11.11 Assembly related matters

The sub-committee had studied the report on possible sites for the Ninth Assembly and members were of the opinion that a decision about the site should be taken by the Central Committee at its forthcoming meeting and not be postponed. CWME would
decide on their venue once the assembly decision had been taken.

At a later session, the General Secretary requested that the Officers be authorised to appoint a group of 10 persons as a core group of the Assembly Preparatory Committee (APC), the full Committee to be named at the next meeting of Central Committee in 2003. The tasks of the APC would include proposing the assembly theme, and working on a system for the allocation of seats.
The Executive Committee **agreed**.

Thanks were expressed to the members of the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee.

12. REPORT OF THE FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE

The report was presented orally by Dean Gadegaard, Co-Moderator of the Finance Sub-Committee in the absence of Dr McKinley Young, who had been nominated as Moderator to replace Bishop Huber. A written report was prepared subsequently, as follows:

12.1 Agenda of the Finance Committee of Central Committee

The Sub-Committee informed the Executive that the agenda of the Finance Committee provided for meetings and collaboration on the part of the Moderator and Co-Moderator of the Finance Committee with the Programme Committee, in the interests of closer integration of programme and financial planning. An update on the membership campaign was also included in the agenda, as well as a review of the status of assembly reserves when the general topic of reserves was addressed.

12.2 Approval of the Financial Statements 2001

The published, audited Financial Statements 2001 were received and reviewed by the Sub-Committee. The drawdown of Programme Fund balances of CHF 5 million and the Operating deficit of approx. CHF 6 million were noted, together with the leadership commentary emphasizing the current treasury management issues experienced in 2002 and the commitment to achieve a balanced operating and activities budget in 2003.

It was also observed that there was a shortfall in investment coverage of Programme Funds of CHF 1 million at the report date.

It was explained that the auditors had issued their opinion only after close examination of the financing planned to cover the deficits budgeted for 2002.

On recommendation of the Finance Sub-Committee, the Executive Committee **approved** the audited Financial Statements 2001.

12.3 Results to 30 June 2002, and full year projection

A brief review was made of the results to date. The Sub-Committee had focused on the need to take action to reduce costs by CHF 2.7 million as now anticipated in the full year projection presented to the Executive Committee. The Sub-Committee endorsed this urgent need to ensure that year end results do not exceed the CHF 0.9 million deficit chargeable to General Reserves anticipated in the forecast.

Concerning investment losses to date, a brief presentation was made on the results of approx. CHF 1.4 million in net unrealized losses, plus a further CHF 0.4 million foreign exchange losses.

Furthermore, it was explained to the Sub-Committee that the contributions from members and partners at this point in the year fell short of the forecast. While it was expected that in the second half of the year this would be compensated for by later donations, the receipt pattern could indicate a risk of falling short even of the forecast.

12.4 Restructuring of Reserves

The Sub-Committee had reviewed an analysis setting out a possible restructuring of reserves. The purpose of the restructuring would be to derive an investment reserve and an increased General Reserve from Support Services Funds and various Property Reserves.

On recommendation of the Sub-Committee, the Executive Committee **agreed** that the restructuring of the reserves be part of the agenda of the Finance Committee of Central Committee. The necessary figures and explanatory notes setting out the components of the various reserves and the reasons for the proposed changes should be presented together with the recommendation to the Central Committee.

12.5 Cash Flow Management and Approval of Loans

The Sub-Committee had reviewed a schedule entitled 'Cash Flow Management 2001 to 2003' which summarized how the deficit of 2001 had been financed, and what the necessary steps were to finance the expected deficit and Programme Funds drawdown in 2002, together with the continuing investment in the renovation of the Château de Bossey. In addition, schedules reviewing the loans held at present, and the two proposed new loans, were reviewed. The proposed loans would be a further CHF 2 million for the renovation of the Château, and the offer of the mortgage loan following negotiations conducted further to the Executive Committee's approval of this step in February 2002.

Responding to a question, Mr Christeler explained that the loan to Bossey was not a mortgage loan but a construction loan. It was however foreseen that when work on the project was completed, the loan would be converted to a mortgage loan under which the repayment would have to be determined. Dr Raiser said that the Bossey Board had considered the situation and were convinced that increased income at Bossey should cover the charges for the mortgage.

There had been general agreement in the Sub-Committee with the principle that the primary purpose of General Fund investments was to cover Programme Fund balances, and that the investments should then be withdrawn to cover any Programme Fund balance decrease.

As had been explained at Nyborg, there was a need to obtain additional financing beyond the use of the General Fund investments to cover the cash outflows related to the early retirement programme, the operating deficit in 2002, and the potential risk of individual activity deficits which could not be offset against Programme Funds. In estimating the required financing for 2002, the most significant unknown was the level to which success might be met in cutting costs between now and the year end to address the risk of deficits on activities further to the decrease of forecast contributions. If the operating deficit were held to the level of CHF 0.9 million and the Programme Fund drawdown of CHF 4.6 million was made as planned, then the use of a loan guaranteed by the building might yet be avoided.

On recommendation of the Sub-Committee, the Executive Committee **approved** the additional credit of CHF 2 million for the renovation of Bossey.

Further, the Executive Committee **approved** the contracting of the mortgage loan on the building. However, the Executive Committee required that staff leadership ensure that all feasible steps be taken to avoid drawing on such a credit by implementation of a cost-cutting programme of CHF 2.7 million as necessary to ensure that the draw on General Reserves be limited to CHF 0.9 million.

12.6 Budget Plan 2003 to 2005

The Sub-Committee had emphasized that the current situation indicated that surpluses would have to be budgeted in 2003 and onwards in order to meet loan repayments which might be required, and to begin the process of rebuilding asset coverage of reserves. Together with the declining contributions, this pointed the way to the urgent need to reduce activities and to restructure the Council.

It was recommended that a revised budget plan 2003 to 2005 be prepared, including reductions in overall costs of the Council leading to annually budgeted surpluses. The Sub-Committee asked that the Executive Committee request that the Programme Committee of the Central Committee work to revise and reduce activity plans. This working effort should be made in close collaboration with the Finance Committee.

The Executive Committee **agreed**.

In discussion it was noted that although every effort must be made to balance future budgets, this should not result in reducing programme activities to such an extent that they become ineffective; they must be presented in such a way as to attract funding.

Concern was expressed that not all members of the Programme Committee (meeting at the same time as the Executive) might be aware of the details of the financial situation. It was essential that there be a harmonization of information between the Finance and Programme Committees.

The general secretary affirmed the awareness among staff that close interaction was needed between the various Committees; transparency in reaching decisions must be ensured. It was therefore proposed that, halfway through the work of the committees during Central Committee, the officers of the three committees meet to discuss possible recommendations that could be supported by the three standing committees and brought for action by Central Committee. The Executive Committee was in general agreement with this suggestion.

Thanks were expressed to the members of the Finance Sub-Committee.

13. REPORT OF THE POLICY SUB-COMMITTEE

The report of the Policy Sub-Committee was presented by Bishop Renz.

13.1 Report of Membership Study Group (MSG)

The Sub-Committee had carefully reviewed the recommendations in Section D of the Final Report of the Membership Study Group and made the following observations:

- the importance of introductory remarks to Section D should be highlighted in the presentation to the Central Committee of the actions the Central Committee would be asked to take on the recommendations;
- the formulation of recommendation 1 could be made more compelling;

- the Central Committee should act on the content of the Appendices A and B mentioned in recommendation 2.a and 2.c; these Appendices contain very important changes and additions to the Rules;
- in point 4 of the Theological Criteria (Appendix A), the words "as churches in the true and full sense of the word" should be put in quotation marks with the mention in brackets (Toronto Statement);
- recommendation 5 was good in its intention but may be difficult to implement;
- in recommendation 6, the words "fair and appropriate procedures", should be clarified or the wording be revised in order to state more clearly what was expected of the Executive Committee;
- in recommendation 10, the words "between the 9th and 10th Assemblies" should be inserted after "mid-term evaluation";

On recommendation of the Sub-Committee, the Executive Committee **agreed**

a) to receive the Final Report of the Membership Study Group with appreciation, and to discharge the Group of the task it was given;
b) to refer the report to Policy Reference Committee I of Central Committee;
c) to ask Policy Reference Committee I to bring to the Central Committee proposals for appropriate action on the recommendations contained in Section D of the report, including the content of Appendices A and B, and taking into account the above observations;
d) to suggest to Policy Reference Committee I to include, where necessary, quotations from the report in the presentation of its proposals for action, in order to enable the Central Committee to act in an informed manner.

The Executive Committee **adopted** the report of the Membership Study Group.

Appreciation was expressed to the members of the Group and to staff for their work on this Membership Study Report (see Appendix III to these minutes).

13.2 Final Report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC

The Sub-Committee had studied the report which was to be presented to the Central Committee for adoption. It was noted that two Padare offerings were foreseen which should help people to understand the technicalities with regard to consensus decision-making and new categories of membership.

In discussion, Metr. Chrysostomos expressed appreciation for the open and fraternal manner in which the Special Commission's work had been conducted. However, he was concerned about the future and how the proposed Standing Committee would continue to work, especially in view of changes expected in the next few years with the appointment of a new general secretary, and subsequently the next assembly and the election of a new Central Committee. He feared that the three years' work of the Special Commission would not be followed up and completed in the way that the Orthodox participants had hoped.

Bishop Renz said it was important for Central Committee to understand that the work of the Special Commission would indeed be continued. There was no question of it becoming a closed chapter: rather, it opened the way to a new way of working in the World Council of Churches.

The Moderator reiterated the importance of how to implement and pursue the process, but in any case the process would continue, and the decisions taken would be implemented and articulated in different ways. This would be discussed in the Central Committee and after that it would be necessary to set up a process with a clear mandate.

The General Secretary referred to his report to Central Committee in which he would express his hope that agreement could be reached on the report and its recommendations. The Standing Committee would continue to operate under the same mandate as that received by the Special Commission from the Central Committee. The whole purpose of the recommendations was to make sure that the work did not come to an end as though it were completed but to recommend a new stage in a process that would continue. The test would be how to move to a new dynamic that would come only after the Central Committee decision. The proposals for changes in the Rules and Constitution had still to be worked out and brought to Central Committee in 2003: this would be done with the help of the Standing Committee and the participation of the Executive.

The Membership Study Group had been appointed by the Executive to look into questions of membership that had arisen during the work of the Special Commission. Close links had been maintained between the two bodies, and the revised draft for changes in the Rules relating to membership was identical in both reports. The work of the MSG was now concluded and was integrated into the report of the Special Commission, while the Standing Committee would have the responsibility to continue the process.

Appreciation was expressed to the members of the Policy Sub-Committee.

14. ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

At a special session of the Executive Committee on Wednesday 28 August 2002, members were informed by Metr. Gennadios, on behalf of the scrutineers, of the result of the ballot by the Central Committee.

According to the procedures, the first ten people on the list in terms of numbers of votes had been elected members of the Search Committee. After some discussion, the Executive appointed six further persons with the highest votes in the categories required to ensure sufficient Orthodox representation, and to correct regional balances where possible. This gave a total of 16 members, plus the two Vice-Moderators.

It was agreed that the person with the highest number of votes be appointed Moderator. This was Rev. Dr Maake Masango. As he would be unable to stay for the whole meeting and would thus miss the first meetings of the Search Committee, it was **agreed** that the President from Africa, Dr Agnes Abuom, be invited to act as moderator for these sessions.

It was clear that the procedures would require some adjustment in the future since a number of ballot papers had not been completed correctly, due in part to difficulties in understanding of the process.

The Moderator expressed gratitude to the three scrutineers for their detailed and time-consuming work.

The result of the ballot would be announced to the Central Committee the following day immediately after the morning session at 12.30 h. A list of the 18 names would be presented without indication of the number of votes each had received.

15. DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

On behalf of the member churches of India, and in the absence of Bishop Zacharias Mar Theophilus, the General Secretary gave some background information about the invitation to the Executive Committee to meet in Kerala in February 2003.

At a later special session of the Executive Committee, Dr Raiser reported that a crisis had arisen between the churches in India. After consultation with Bishop Zacharias, it seemed wiser to postpone a meeting of the Executive in Kerala for the time being. The General Secretary would send a message of regret to the General Secretary of the NCC of India, expressing the hope that an invitation could be honored at a more suitable time.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee would take place in Geneva on 18-21 February 2003.

16. CLOSING ACTIONS

The Moderator expressed thanks to the members of the Executive Committee for their participation, and to staff for ensuring the smooth running of the meeting. He then declared this meeting of the Executive Committee closed.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Officers:	H.H. Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia	(Moderator)
	Mrs Justice Sophia Adinyira	(Vice-Moderator)
	Dr Marion Best	(Vice-Moderator)
	Rev. Dr Konrad Raiser	(General Secretary)
Members:	Bishop Dr. Hilarion Alfeyev	
	Rev. Yadessa Daba	
	Rev. Inamar Correa De Souza	
	Ms Donnalie E.C. Edwards-Cabey	
	Dean Anders Gadegaard	
	Ms Carmencita Karagdag	
	H.G. Archbishop Mor Cyril Aphrem Karim	
	Rev. Dr Clifton Kirkpatrick	
	Rev. Septemmy E. Lakawa	
	Prof. Dr Samuel Lee	
	Rev. Dr Maake S.J. Masango	
	H.G. Archbishop Nifon of Targoviste	
	Ms Abigail O. Ogunsanya	
	Rt.Rev. Dr Zacharias Mar Theophilus	
Apologies:	Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky	
	Ms Jana Krajciriková	
	Rev. Dr Ilaitia Sevati Tuwere	
	Bishop McKinley Young	
Substitutes:	Bishop Dr. Rolf Koppe	
	Metr. Gennadios of Sassima	
	Dr. Peter Bouteneff	
Presidents:	Dr Agnes Abuom	
	H.E. Metr. Chrysostomos of Ephesus	
	H.H. Mar Ignatius Zakka I Iwas	

	Bishop Eberhardt Renz
Staff:	Mr Robert Christeler Rev. Dwain Epps Ms Kristine Greenaway Mr Michiel Hardon Ms Geneviève Jacques Ms Christina Minezac Rev. Dr Sam Kobia Mr Hubert van Beek Mr Georges Lemopoulos Rev. Sabine Udodesku
Staff Consultant:	Rev. Gordon How
Minute-Writer:	Ms Rosemary Green
Administration:	Ms Ursula Zierl

APPENDIX II

SUGGESTED MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-COMMITTEES

Finance

Dean Anders Gadegaard (Moderator)
Dr. Agnes Abuom
Rev. Yadessa Daba
Ms Donnalie E.C. Edwards-Cabey
Ms Carmencita Karagdag
Ms Abigail O. Ogunsanya

Staffing and Nominations

Mrs Justice Sophia Adinyira (Moderator)
Bishop Dr. Hilarion Alfeyev
Rev. Inamar Correa De Souza
H.E. Metr. Gennadios of Sassima
Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick
Prof. Dr. Samuel Lee
H.G. Archbishop Nifon of Targoviste
H.H. Mar Ignatius Zakka I Iwas

Policy (Special Commission, Membership Study)

Bishop Eberhardt Renz (Moderator)
Dr. Peter Bouteneff
H.E. Metr. Chrysostomos of Ephesus
H.G. Archbishop Mor Cyril Aphrem Karim
Bishop Dr. Rolf Koppe
Rev. Septemmy E. Lakawa
Rev. Dr. Maake S.J. Masango
Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus

APPENDIX III

FINAL REPORT OF THE MEMBERSHIP STUDY GROUP

Guide to the Report

The report is presented in four sections:

- ***Section A** reviews the context in which the Membership Study Group has undertaken its work, demonstrating that it has also sought to relate its work to the implementation of the CUV.*
- ***Section B** provides a summary of the historical background of the topic and issues raised.*
- ***Section C** provides discussion and exposition of the work of the Study Group.*
- ***Section D** includes the finite actions which the Study Group recommends.*

Certain matters have to be spelt out in more detail and therefore attached to the report as appendices.

- ***Appendix A** provides language for some proposed changes to the Rules (Article I, Sections 1, 2 and 3) specifically that related to criteria for membership as recommended also by the Special Commission.*
- ***Appendix B** provides language for proposed changes to the Rules (continuing the revised language of Appendix A to this report, replacing Article I, Sections 4 and 5). Additional changes to the Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches are anticipated to be necessary as well.*
- ***Appendix C** contains a summary of the report of the Study Group as the Group's work has overlapped - but been informed by - the work of the Special Commission. This material is included because the specific subject matters was received by and incorporated into the Final Report of the Special Commission.*
- ***Appendix D** lists the members of the Membership Study Group*

The Central Committee will be invited:

- *to **receive** the present report,*

- *to **take action** on the proposals in Section D.*

SECTION A

I. Mandate and Process

1. The Membership Study Group (the "Study Group") was constituted by "and is responsible to" the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches (the "WCC) at its January 2001 meeting in response to issues raised in the ongoing work of the WCC and also to issues raised during the work of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC (the "Special Commission"). The eight-member Study Group, along with two staff members, has been designated in a manner consistent with the composition of the Special Commission, that is, with half of the members of the Study Group and staff representing member churches from the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches, and half representing other member churches. Five members of the Study Group also have been members of the Special Commission.

2. The Study Group has met independently on four occasions. Additionally, the five members of the Study Group who are also members of the Special Commission, met as the core of a membership subcommittee of the Special Commission during plenary meetings of the Special Commission in Berekfürdö (Hungary) and Järvenpää (Finland). In addition to this final report, three interim reports have been prepared: two interim reports to the Executive Committee and a provisional interim report to the Special Commission. Comments from the Executive Committee have been integrated into the work of the Study Group. Some interim recommendations of the Membership Study Group were included in the Final Report of the Special Commission and are also included in this final report of the Membership Study Group as Appendices A and B.

3. All reports of the Study Group have been made available to all members of the Special Commission. The meetings of the Study Group purposely have been scheduled to alternate with the meetings of the Special Commission so

that at every stage of the development of the work of the Special Commission, the Commission has been informed of the work of the Study Group and at every stage of the work of the Study Group, the Study Group has had the benefit of the comments, discussion and advice of the Special Commission. The final meeting of the Study Group took place several weeks after the conclusion of the final meeting of the Special Commission.

4. The Study Group reviewed an extensive dossier assembled by staff of material relating to membership in the WCC, from the inception of the Council through the work of the Special Commission. In addition, the Study Group reviewed the Constitution and Rules of the WCC, the Common Understanding and Vision document (the "CUV"), and *The Ecumenical Movement -- An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices* (Kinnamon and Cope, eds. WCC Publications, 1997), as well as documents prepared by staff, including a "Survey of Churches Received into Membership 1975 – 2002", an analysis of representation on Central Committee or in the Presidium since the Nairobi Assembly, and the current application form for membership. The Study Group has undertaken at each step to integrate into its work review of the historical documentation on the issues of membership, to understand the implications for the WCC as an institution and for the churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC of the current model of membership and representation, and to consider practical effects of its recommendations.

5. All of the foregoing was undertaken whilst keeping in mind the terms of reference for the Study Group, the Common Understanding and Vision document particularly the many provisions related to issues of membership in the WCC , and especially the overarching question referred by the Steering Committee of the Special Commission in its *aide-memoire*, Geneva, March 2001: **What kind of Council do we envisage in light of the CUV?"**

SECTION B

II. Summary of History and Issues

6. The initial proposal (1936) for the model of membership was for a system of regional representation of the churches, including places reserved for the Orthodox churches, and representatives of "younger" churches to be appointed on the advice of the International Missionary Council (*The Genesis and Formation of the World Council of Churches*, W. A. Visser 't Hooft, WCC Publications, 1982, pp. 40--41). This regional approach was criticized by the advocates of the confessional principle who proposed (in 1945) a representation based on world confessional families which "would be able to deal more directly with the confessional differences which had led to separation." (p. 61) The ensuing discussion led to an agreement whereby the "member churches would be the basic units" with "both regional and confessional factors taken into consideration." (p.61) It was understood that exclusive implementation of the regional principle would have resulted in a World Council of national or regional councils, and the confessional approach would have led to a World Council of confessional families or communions. By 1948, the structure currently employed by the Council was in place, with direct membership in the Council by churches, "seats in the Assembly allocated by the Central Committee, and the membership of the Central Committee …to be distributed among the member churches by the Assembly." (p. 62). Subsequent studies of the issue did not result in recommendations for change. A group commissioned to articulate "The Meaning of Membership" reported to the Central Committee in 1995, much of which report was subsequently incorporated into the CUV.

7. The original model of membership was reaffirmed in the CUV and by constitutional change which accompanied adoption of the CUV by the Harare assembly that the "primary purpose of the fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches is to *call one another* to visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world in order that the world may believe" (Constitution, Art. III; emphasis supplied).

8. Requirements for membership have remained largely unchanged since the inception of the WCC over fifty years ago. Currently, membership in the WCC is available to any church that expresses agreement with the constitutional Basis of the World Council of Churches --*"The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit"* (Constitution, Article I) -- and that meets four basic criteria for membership outlined by the WCC Rules: autonomy, sustained independence, commitment to constructive local ecumenical relations, and adequate size (Rules, I.3*)*. No impediments have been placed in the way of applicants from the same confession and the same nation or region as that of existing members (although churches in the same country or region that do not fulfil the criterion of size may jointly apply for membership -- Rules, I.4).

9. While the model of membership has remained the same and the requirements have only been slightly modified since the inception of the WCC, the character of the Council has changed in its half-century of institutional life. At its inception, membership was based upon the then current participation in the Faith and Order and Life and Work Movements, which included churches from the British Isles, continental Europe, North America, Australia and other continents as represented by the missionary councils, as well as several of the Orthodox churches. In the decade of the 1960's, many other Orthodox churches joined the WCC as well as churches from the southern hemisphere, mostly arising out of the missionary efforts of the northern churches. Following the Upsala Assembly (1968) and continuing throughout the following decades, many more churches, primarily from the south, were received into membership, not only churches arising out of the missionary movement, but also independent churches. Membership has increased from 147 churches in 1948, including 5 Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches, to 342 churches in 2001, including 21 Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches.

10. A statistical analysis of membership regarding churches approved as new member churches since 1975 (numbering 103), reveals that there were a significant number of new member churches of a small constituency (25,000 – 50,000) (23). Member churches that were products of divisions numbered six matched almost exactly by the number of churches which came into being as the result of a church union (7). The survey disclosed that most new member churches are related to Christian World Communions and the vast majority

both grew out of missionary work (75) and were located in the southern hemisphere (96).

11. The conclusions stated in the Survey indicate an unabated trend of continued growth of numbers of member churches. If the model of individual church affiliation with the Council is continued, the disparity in numbers of member churches between the Orthodox churches and the rest of the WCC affiliated churches would continue to grow. Proliferation of member churches, however, carries with it difficulties beyond the issues raised by the Orthodox churches. There is continuing concern that the high number of churches admitted as member churches from the same confession and the same country is inconsistent with the stated purposes of the WCC for "visible unity" at the most basic level. Practical problems reside also in the administration of such numbers of churches: in representation, co-ordination and communication with such a large number of constituencies, in addition to financial ramifications for the Council.

12. In some parts of the world, especially in the north, there is de facto Eucharistic fellowship among many churches, with many examples of successful bilateral and multilateral dialogues. This progress toward visible unity has not included the Orthodox, given "…the fact that the two ecclesiologies operating in the WCC – Protestant and Orthodox – differ significantly, making *koinonia* more a goal than a reality. (*Orthodox Taskforce Paper, May 2001, Membership Dossier, Document 19.)* Moreover, growing unity among churches other than Orthodox Churches has yet to be fully realized in the membership structure of the Council.

13. The current model and requirements for membership have led to (a) a dramatic increase in the number of member churches belonging to the Western tradition, particularly Protestant churches, and to the marginalizing of the voice of the Eastern churches, which only rarely form into additional recognized autonomous or autocephalous churches, as well as the voices of some other minority churches, and (b) a situation in which churches are not encouraged to bridge differences at the local level with neighbouring autonomous churches of the same confessional family or the same tradition.

14. The current membership of the WCC is mainly composed of two of four main ecclesial traditions or streams of Christianity, Orthodox and Protestant/Anglican, with a small number of churches from the

Evangelical/Pentecostal/Independent tradition. New ways of relating to the ecumenical fellowship of the WCC may encourage participation by the other streams of Christianity currently outside of the ecumenical fellowship of the WCC, namely Roman Catholic and Evangelical/Pentecostal/Independent churches.

15. The Study Group accepted among its primary tasks to evaluate and offer proposals for action regarding (a) forms of membership in the World Council of Churches, (b) the meaning of membership, (c) modes of relating to the World Council of Churches, (d) criteria for membership, (e) procedures for admission of new members, (f) oversight of membership, and (g) models of representation and participation.

SECTION C

III. Forms of membership in the World Council of Churches

16. After having discussed the issues raised by the current membership model in which individual churches are direct members of the Council, the Study Group very seriously explored alternative models of membership. As the Study Group explored a families of churches approach, it became clear that, despite the success of this model in some regional contexts, reorganising on the global level according to confessional families would not be feasible. Every variation of family grouping would be problematic to at least some, if not many, of the hundreds of Protestant, Anglican, Evangelical, Pentecostal and Old Catholic churches, as well as the Orthodox churches, currently in membership in the WCC. The self-understanding of some would prevent their grouping at all. Even mandating groupings that would seem to be the most natural or logical, that is, grouping according to a church's own denomination (for example, all "Anglican", all "Reformed", all "Methodist" churches) would be problematic for some, particularly in the south where grouping according to denomination raises historical issues of colonialism, and grouping by region seems more congenial.

17. Membership according to geographical region would be problematic for other churches, including the Orthodox churches. Using national boundaries as the

criteria for any type of definition or grouping concept for churches raises the danger of giving to such boundaries a theological significance they do not necessarily warrant. In both the families of churches model and the regional model, there is danger of marginalizing the newer churches of the south. Self-understanding and indigenization of the local churches from the historical traditions must be respected in their sense of individual church.

18. All of these options would significantly diminish the sense of ownership and fellowship among churches belonging to the WCC as the primary reality of the WCC. Restructuring membership in either of these ways, therefore, would seem to reverse the emphasis of the Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC. The Study Group concludes, therefore, that the WCC should continue to maintain the model of the Council as a fellowship of "churches". However, the Study Group believes that there are two crucial issues that must be addressed within the current context of the WCC. First, how are major ecclesial traditions, or "streams of Christianity" appropriately represented in the governance of the WCC? Second, how does the current process of membership and representation serve to strengthen the visible unity of the churches in the local context? These questions are addressed in Paragraphs 20, 21 and 38--46 of this Report.

19. Whilst affirming the current form of membership of individual, autonomous churches, the Study Group would like to emphasize the significance of grouped or joint membership, theologically as well as in terms of the purpose and functions of the Council. Member churches or applicant churches which would be able to express their belonging to the fellowship jointly, in a form suitable to their ecclesial self-understanding, would respond in an important manner to the expectation of the founders of the Council that "When churches come together .... the fact of their common relationship to the one and same Lord Jesus Christ becomes decisive, and it becomes difficult for them to continue their separate lives" (Visser 't Hooft, p.91). For this purpose the Study Group and the Special Commission draw the attention of the churches to already existing provisions in the Rules.

20. In addition to providing for direct membership by individual churches, the Rules currently offer churches the opportunity to participate in the **Council as** one "church" by grouping together within a country or region. According to Article I of the Rules: "The term 'church' as used in this article includes an association, convention or federation of autonomous churches. A group of

churches within a country or region may determine to participate in the World Council of Churches as one church." A number of associations, conventions or federations of autonomous churches have been admitted into membership under this provision, providing examples of local co-operation and economies of participation consistent with the primary purpose of the Council "calling one another to visible unity". The Evangelical Church in Germany, the Swiss Protestant Federation and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India are such examples.

21. The Study Group and the Special Commission urge churches to determine to participate with other churches locally as members in the Council using this provision of the Rules. The Study Group also recognizes that churches may wish to determine to participate in the Council as one "church" together with other autonomous churches of the same confession, and offers a modification of the language of Rule I to accommodate this option as well. In the interest of promoting visible unity and abating the trend toward fragmentation, the Study Group recommends that applicant churches belonging to the same ecclesial traditions of churches currently in the fellowship and in close geographic proximity, be urged to show a compelling reason why they should not join together with the existing member churches for purposes of membership. At the same time, where there are existing member churches which belong to the same ecclesial traditions and are in geographic proximity, they shall be encouraged to question the need to maintain separate membership in the Council.

IV. The Meaning of Membership

22. Several sections of *The Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC* (Sections 3.1 – 3.12) help to understand the meaning of "membership/fellowship" in the World Council of Churches. The Basis of the Council as a fellowship of churches with a common calling "indicates that the Council is not itself a 'church' and – as the Toronto statement categorically declares -- must never become a superchurch." The Basis makes clear, however, that the Council is more than a "mere functional association." (CUV 3.2) "The existence of the World Council of Churches as a fellowship of churches thus poses to its member churches what the Ecumenical Patriarchate has called an 'ecclesiological challenge': to clarify the meaning and the extent of the fellowship they experience in the Council, as well as the ecclesiological

significance of *koinonia*, which is the purpose and aim of the WCC but not yet a given reality." (CUV 3.4)

23. The significance of the CUV for applicant and member churches cannot be overstated, particularly the description of "A Fellowship of Churches" (CUV 3.2 – 3.7.9) and "A Common Calling" (CUV 3.8 – 3.12.5). One important description is as follows:

> *By their mutual engagement in the Council, the Churches open themselves to be challenged by one another to deeper, more costly ecumenical commitment. This mutual accountability takes many forms: recognising their solidarity with each other, assisting each other in cases of need, refraining from actions incompatible with brotherly and sisterly relations, entering into spiritual relationships to learn from each other, consulting with each other "to learn of the Lord Jesus Christ what witness he would have them to bear to the world in his name." (CUV 3.5.6)*

Copies of the CUV should be made available to all applicant churches with their attention specifically drawn to these sections.

V. Modes of relating to the World Council of Churches

24. The Study Group reviewed the current Rules regarding member churches, including the language of membership and the categories of membership and associate membership. For some current and former member churches of the Council, and possibly churches not currently or formerly members of the Council, use of the juridical term "member" to denote participation in the fellowship of churches seemed to be problematic. As the Study Group explored alternative language, it became clear that the issue was more than semantic. That exploration, however, also made clear, that the current phraseology and categories for member churches contained in the Rules, do not reflect the understanding articulated by the CUV of the relationship among member churches and vis à vis the institution of the WCC.

25. The current structure does not provide adequately for churches which may wish to participate in the work of the WCC in some capacity, but which find themselves either unwilling or not able to be fully committed as member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC. Noting that the fellowship is not complete without the Roman Catholic Church and the

Evangelical/Pentecostal churches, the Study Group and the Special Commission agree that ways of relating to the WCC other than formal membership in the organization would benefit the Council and provide the wider ecumenical space.

26. Responding both to the semantic adjustment and to the deeper question of providing alternative modes of relating to the Council, the Study Group, together with the Special Commission, recommend two possibilities for churches wanting to relate to the WCC: (a) member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC, (b) churches in association with the WCC.

    Member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC are churches that agree with the Basis of the WCC, confirm their commitment to the purposes and functions of the Council, and conform to the theological and organizational criteria.
    Churches in association with the WCC are churches that agree with the Basis of the Council and are accepted for such status. Such churches can send representatives to the Assembly and the Central Committee who can speak with the permission of the chair, but have no right to vote. Such churches can be invited to participate in the work of commissions, advisory groups, and other consultative bodies of the Council as consultants or advisors. Churches applying to be in association with the WCC should state in writing their reasons for requesting this relationship, which reasons must be approved by the Central Committee.

27. Churches in association with the WCC would have the possibility of participating in the work of the WCC as described, but would not be identified with decisions taken or statements issued by the Council. There would be no financial obligation on the part of the church for the work of the Council, nor would financial support be made available from the Council to such churches to facilitate their participation.

28. Recognizing the commitment to fellowship shared alike by large churches and small member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC, the Study Group recommends that the current category of associate members by virtue of size under Rule I.5.a.1 be incorporated into the description of member churches belonging to the fellowship of the World Council of Churches, retaining however the restrictions on participation by and representation of churches of small size. (See attached Appendix A.)

29. The Study Group investigated the issue of minimum size required of a church applying for membership. Within the trend over the years since 1975 showing continued growth in the number of member churches and the difficulties attendant thereto, there are many churches of small size, having between 25,000 and 50,000 members. In order to help mitigate this trend, the Study Group recommends to increase the minimum number of members of a church accepted for individual membership from 25,000 to 50,000 members, under normal circumstances. An applicant church with fewer than 50,000 members but more than 10,000 members which has not been granted a size exception as provided in the Rules, but otherwise is eligible for membership, could be accepted as a member church belonging to the fellowship of the WCC, but still subject to the provisions of the Rules that such churches do not have the right to vote in the Assembly, but may participate with other such churches in selecting five representatives to the Central Committee in accordance with Art. III.4.b.3 of the Rules.

30. The Study Group recommends that the existing category of associate member church under Rule I.5.a.2 be eliminated in favour of the new category of relationship with the World Council of Churches entitled "churches in association with the World Council of Churches." (See attached Appendix B.)

VI. Criteria for Membership

31. The current membership definition and criteria for membership insufficiently reflect the ongoing work of the Council regarding ecclesial aspects of membership. The Study Group agreed with the Special Commission, that the existing criteria need to be clarified, expanded, codified and specifically subscribed to by applicant churches. The founding and governing documents of any applicant church, as well as its life and witness and self-understanding must be consistent with the Basis of the WCC and applicant churches also should understand themselves as conforming to the criteria, and be ready to give an account of their faith and witness in relationship to such terms.

32. "Revised Criteria" are proposed to be included as a new Section 3 of Article I of the Rules in lieu of the existing Section 3. These revised criteria are included in this report as Appendix A and in the Final Report of the Special Commission as Appendix C. The proposed revised criteria draw from the Toronto statement, assembly statements and Faith and Order documents, and

include ecclesial marks as sought by the Special Commission with a reference to the Purposes and Functions of the Council as included in the Constitution.

VII. Procedures for Admission of New Members

33. The current application process relies upon staff in a manner inconsistent with the CUV such that the churches themselves are not involved in the application process until the application is presented to the Executive Committee for action. The current or any revised membership model would include a process of application to join the WCC. The Study Group suggests that the subcommittee of the Executive Committee that currently receives applications from churches seeking to become member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC, be enabled to process, investigate and evaluate applications. It should assure the member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC that any applicant church is in conformity with the Rules, exhibits and retains all of the required criteria and demonstrates commitment to the purposes of the WCC in its local context over an extended period of time.

34. Furthermore, the Study Group and the Special Commission recognized that new churches should best be received, through the then-applicable decision-making procedures, at meetings of the Central Committee and not the Assembly, following review by the subcommittee referred to in the previous paragraph and approval for recommendation by the Executive Committee. This process would include that the application for joining the WCC would be presented to one Central Committee meeting, with an intervening period of participation in the work of the Council and interaction with the local fellowship of member churches, and a decision taken on the application at a subsequent meeting of Central Committee.

35. The Study Group addressed the relationship of the WCC with the churches that constitute an "association, convention, or federation of autonomous churches" considered to be and admitted to the fellowship of churches as one "church" (Rule I). Concern was expressed that the Executive Committee shall have determined (1) that each church within that association or grouping independently agrees with the Basis and fulfils the criteria set forth in the Rules for individual membership in the WCC, and (2) in the event any additional church or churches seeks to affiliate with the association, federation

or grouping, that such church[es] agrees with the Basis and fulfils the criteria set forth in the Rules.

VIII. Oversight of Membership

36. The Study Group explored some related issues arising out of the experience of the Council over the past fifty years, including: (1) churches which do not participate in the life of the Council in any respect over a period spanning two Assemblies; (2) churches which do not make any effort to assist in the financial support of the Council for an extended period of time; (3) churches which would not meet the criteria for membership in the first instance, but which claim membership in the Council by reason of membership in an association of churches which is itself a member of the Council, and (4) churches whose self-definition and practice have evolved in ways that may no longer be consistent with the Basis or criteria.

37. In not one of these cases is the Council now provided with an effective procedure for re-examining membership of such church in the Council. The Study Group recommends that the General Secretary refer any such situations to the Executive Committee and that the Executive Committee develop fair and appropriate procedures to address them.

IX. Models of Representation and Participation

38. The current model of representation of member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC, at the Assembly, on Central Committee, on Executive Committee and in ancillary committees has evolved with some difficulty. The seats in the Assembly are allocated by the Central Committee, with the understanding that all member churches are expected to be represented at the Assembly. Membership of the Central Committee, limited by Rule and practicality to 150 members, is elected from among the delegates of the member churches by the Assembly, with due regard for numerical importance, adequate confessional representation, adequate geographical distribution, and consideration for appropriate gender and youth representation. Currently, twenty-five percent of seats on the Central and Executive Committees are reserved for representatives of Orthodox churches which have their own process of nominating representatives to Central Committee. A number of member churches or groups of member churches have procedures for making nominations for election to the Central Committee. The survey of distribution

since 1975 of Central Committee seats among the member churches shows that some seventy churches out of 240 that were members in 1975 have not been afforded a seat on the Central Committee since 1975.

39. Members of Central Committee represent their own churches and are accountable both to their own church and to the Central Committee. Some already represent wider groupings of member churches, which may be confessionally or geographically defined. However, this system results in a large number of member churches other than the Orthodox member churches having no direct representation on a Central Committee. This is an aspect of representation which the Study Group believes should be addressed.

40. For many churches, their ecclesial tradition is primary to their self-understanding; for many other churches, their geographical setting is primary in their self-understanding. For some churches, both ecclesial tradition and location are significant when determining appropriate representation. There are also member churches for which their international character is an essential mark of their self-understanding.

41. The Study Group suggests that where no grouping of member churches already exists, all member churches join in groupings for purposes of representation and participation. The Special Commission and the Membership Study Group propose that churches join in groupings, e.g. geographically, confessionally, or according to other models, in order to make nominations for the Central Committee. If this principle is established, a process of grouping member churches will have to be carefully worked out and agreed upon in close consultation with the member churches.

42. The Study Group believes that the process of representation and participation, wherever possible, should enhance the New Delhi vision which held that "*...the unity which is both God's will and his gift to his Church is being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Savior are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship...*" By inviting the churches in a country or region to group themselves for the purpose of participating jointly in the life and work of the Council, the WCC contributes to strengthening the local fellowship of churches. It is hoped that this will result in a stronger sense of common accountability for their representation in the governing bodies of the WCC, especially the Central Committee. It may also encourage other ways of joint

participation in programme activities, responses to studies, common action, mutual accountability, etc. Strengthening local fellowships of churches, whether of the same or of different confessions, is part of the journey towards the "*one fully committed fellowship*" held up by the visionary statement of the New Delhi Assembly. The Orthodox, in welcoming this emphasis at New Delhi, stressed the need for *"...a reintegration of Christian mind, a recovery of apostolic tradition, a fullness of Christian vision and belief, in agreement with all ages."*

43. The process of electing a Central Committee would begin prior to the Assembly with member churches identifying persons from within its delegation to the Assembly available to attend the Assembly and who would have the approval and support of that church to represent it on governing bodies. These names would be made available to a local grouping, or other model of member churches. Such a grouping would then discuss and agree on a list, offering a list of names significantly larger than the number of vacancies allocated to that grouping. Working from these lists, the nominations committee will have the crucial role of shaping nominations for the Central Committee by taking into account the various priorities regarding balances of representation. Those individuals agreeing to be placed in nomination for the Central Committee would be expected to be available, responsible and accountable both to their own ecclesial tradition or family through their own church and also to the grouping of churches which has proposed them, both with regard to speaking for them at meetings, and reporting to them following meetings.

44. In order for the groupings to function and for the Central Committee member to undertake the responsibilities of availability, accountability and communication as spelled out above properly, appropriate resources and ecumenical formation would, where necessary, have to be provided.

45. The Study Group proposes that the effectiveness of the new model referred to in the previous paragraphs should be tested by a mid-term evaluation to which both Central Committee members and member churches should be invited to contribute. An analysis of the findings of such an evaluation should be presented to the officers of the Central Committee for necessary action.

46. The reservation on the WCC governing bodies of twenty-five percent of seats for representatives of Orthodox churches demonstrates the presence in the

constituency of the Council of primarily two of the main streams of Christianity. It also acknowledges the realities imposed by the current and future membership pattern of the WCC, in which the Orthodox churches are a numerical minority because of their ecclesiological self-understanding and the dramatic increase in the number of member churches belonging to the western tradition as discussed in paragraph 13. The existence of these two main streams in the Council's constituency is better reflected in the composition of the Standing Committee on Orthodox Participation in the WCC proposed by the Special Commission, based on the parity principle of fifty percent from the Orthodox churches with the balance from the other denominations represented in the WCC. The Study Group expects that some other committees and groups will be composed on the parity basis, particularly as the results of the work of the Special Commission and the Study Group are absorbed into the life of the WCC.

SECTION D

Some of the proposals listed below may require changes to the Constitution and to the Rules of the WCC, which must be adopted by the Assembly and by the Central Committee respectively. Language has been offered for some changes to the Rules as indicated in Appendix A and Appendix B, subject to the advise of legal counsel, with the expectation that other language of the Constitution and Rules would have to be conformed to those proposed changes. The articulation of theological criteria for membership included in Appendix A has been formulated by the Study Group and by the Special Commission with the advise of the Executive Committee.

Resolutions: The Membership Study Group

1. **RECOMMENDS** that the churches take action, where appropriate, to come together locally or confessionally for the purpose of membership in the WCC, using the existing provisions and proposed amendments in the Rules [paragraph 21].

2. **RECOMMENDS** that the Constitution and Rules of the Council be amended in order to:

a) Revise the "Criteria" section of the Rules in accordance with the specific language included as the proposed revised Rule I.3 included in Appendix A to this report and Appendix C to the report of the Special Commission, notably with respect to the inclusion of specific theological criteria for membership [paragraphs 31/32];

b) Provide two possibilities for churches wanting to relate to the WCC:
   - member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC
   - churches in association with the WCC [paragraph 26];

c) Incorporate the procedure, rights and expectations for the mode of relationship to the WCC described as "churches in association with the WCC" as proposed in Appendix B [paragraphs 26/27];

d) Eliminate the current category of "associate membership"[paragraphs 28/30];

e) Incorporate the current associate member churches by virtue of size (Rule I.5.a.1 category) into the description of member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC, retaining restrictions on the participation and representation of small churches [paragraph 28];

f) Include in the term "church" a grouping of autonomous churches of the same confession [paragraph 21];

g) Increase the minimum number of members required of churches for individual membership in the fellowship of the WCC from 25,000 to 50,000 members [paragraph 29];

3. **RECOMMENDS** that churches be accepted to join the fellowship of the WCC at meetings of the Central Committee and not the Assembly. The application for joining the WCC would be presented to one Central Committee meeting, with an intervening period of participation in the work of the Council and interaction with the local fellowship of member churches, and

the decision taken on the application at a subsequent meeting of the Central Committee.[paragraph 34]

4. **RECOMMENDS** that the subcommittee of the Executive Committee that currently receives applications from churches seeking to become member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC, be enabled to process, investigate and evaluate applications, assure the existing member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC that any applicant church is in conformity with the Rules, exhibits and retains all of the required criteria, and demonstrates commitment to the purposes of the WCC in its local context over an extended period of time. [paragraph 33]

5. **RECOMMENDS** that the Executive Committee determine that each church within an "association, convention, or federation of autonomous churches" considered to be and admitted to the fellowship of churches as one "church" (Rule I) independently agrees with the Basis and fulfils the criteria set forth in the Rules for individual membership in the WCC. In the event any additional church or churches seeks to affiliate with the association, convention or federation, that such church[es] agrees with the Basis and fulfils the criteria set forth in the Rules. [paragraph 35]

6. **RECOMMENDS** that the General Secretary refer to the Executive Committee situations regarding churches about which questions have arisen as described in paragraph 36 of this report and that the Executive Committee develop fair and appropriate procedures to address these situations. [paragraph 36]

7. **RECOMMENDS** that churches join in groupings, e.g. geographically, confessionally, or according to other models, for purposes of representation and participation, including making nominations for the Central Committee. [paragraph 42]

8. **RECOMMENDS** a process of electing a Central Committee whereby

a) member churches would identify persons available to attend the Assembly and who would have the approval and support of that church to represent it on governing bodies;

b) geographically local or other models of groupings of churches would then discuss and agree on a list of names from among those approved by its constituent churches, which list should be significantly larger than the number of vacancies allocated to that grouping;
c) the nominations committee of the Assembly would use those lists from which to shape nominations for the Central Committee by taking into account the various priorities regarding balances of representation;
d) individuals agreeing to be placed in nomination for the Central Committee should understand that they will be expected to be available, responsible and accountable both to their own ecclesial tradition or family through their own church and also to the grouping of churches which has proposed them, both with regard to speaking for them at meetings, and reporting to them following meetings. [paragraph 43]

9. **RECOMMENDS** that appropriate resources, where necessary, be provided for the ecumenical formation of Central Committee members and to undertake the responsibilities of accountability and communication to the grouping of churches which has proposed their name for Central Committee. [paragraph 44]

10. **RECOMMENDS** that the effectiveness of the new model of representation and participation should be tested by a mid-term evaluation to which both Central Committee members and member churches should be invited to contribute. An analysis of the findings of such an evaluation should be presented to the officers of the Central Committee for necessary action. [paragraph 45]

APPENDIX A

PROPOSAL FOR CHANGES TO THE RULES OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

I. Membership in the Fellowship of the World Council of Churches

The World Council of Churches is comprised of churches which have constituted the Council or which have been admitted into membership and which continue to belong to the fellowship of the World Council of Churches. The term "church" as used in this article could also include an association, convention or federation of autonomous churches. A group of churches within a country or region, or within the same confession, may determine to participate in the World Council of Churches as one church. Churches within the same country or region or within the same confession may apply to belong to the fellowship of the Council, in order to respond to their common calling, to strengthen their joint participation and/or to satisfy the requirement of minimum size (Rules I, (3)(b) (iii)). Such groupings of churches are encouraged by the World Council of Churches; each individual church within the grouping must satisfy the criteria for membership in the fellowship of the World Council of Churches, except the requirements of size.

The General Secretary shall maintain the official lists of member churches that have been accepted to belong to the fellowship of the World Council of Churches, noting any special arrangement accepted by the Assembly or Central Committee. Separate lists shall be maintained of voting and nonvoting member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC. The General Secretary shall also maintain a list of churches in association with the Council.

1. Application

A church that wishes to join the World Council of Churches shall apply in writing to the General Secretary.

2. Processing

The General Secretary shall submit all such applications to the Central Committee (see Art. II of the Constitution) together with such information as he or she considers necessary to enable the Central Committee to make a decision on the application.

3. Criteria

Churches applying to join the World Council of Churches ("applicant churches") are required first to express agreement with the Basis on which the Council is founded and confirm their commitment to the Purposes and Functions of the Council as defined in Articles I and III of the Constitution. The Basis states: "The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

Applicant churches also should understand themselves as conforming to the following criteria, and be ready to give an account of their faith and witness in relationship to these terms.

A. Theological

1. In its life and witness, the church professes faith in the Triune God as expressed in the scriptures and in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.

2. The church maintains a ministry of proclaiming the Gospel and celebrating the sacraments.

3. The church baptizes in the name of the "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" and acknowledges the need to move toward the recognition of the Baptism of other churches.

4. The church recognizes the presence and activity of Christ and the Holy Spirit outside its own boundaries and prays for the wisdom of all in the awareness that other member churches also believe in the Holy Trinity and the saving grace of God.

5. The church recognizes in the other member churches of the WCC elements of the true church, even if it does not regard them as churches in the true and full sense of the word.

B. Organizational

1. The church must produce evidence of sustained autonomous life and organization.

2. The church must be able to take the decision to apply for formal membership in the WCC and continue to belong to the fellowship of the WCC without obtaining the permission of any other body or person.

3. An applicant church must ordinarily have at least 50,000 members. The Central Committee may decide for exceptional reasons to accept a church that does not fulfill the criterion of size.

4. An applicant church with fewer than 50,000 members but more than 10,000 members which has not been granted a size exception, but otherwise is eligible for membership can be accepted subject to the following provisions: (a) they shall not have the right to vote in the Assembly, and (b) they may participate with other such churches in selecting five representatives to the Central Committee in accordance with Section III (4)(b)(3) of the Rules. In all other respects, such churches shall be referred to as member churches in fellowship with the WCC.

5. Churches must recognize the essential interdependence of the member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC, particularly those of the same confession, and should make every effort to practice constructive ecumenical relations with other churches within their country or region. This will normally mean that the church is a member of the national council of churches or similar body and of the regional/subregional ecumenical organization.

Other changes to the Rules and to the Constitution, including to conform language to the language changes indicated in this proposed revision to the Rules, may be required if proposals of the Special Commission and the Membership Study Group are adopted by the Central Committee.

APPENDIX B

PROPOSAL FOR CHANGES TO THE RULES OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

I. Membership in the Fellowship of the World Council of Churches

...

4. Churches in association with the WCC

a) A church that agrees with the Basis of the Council may apply in writing to the World Council of Churches requesting to be received as a church in association with the WCC, stating its reasons for requesting this mode of relating with the Council. If the reasons are approved by the Central Committee, such a church may be accepted to be in association with the WCC.

b) Churches in association with the WCC can send representatives to the Assembly and the Central Committee who can speak with the permission of the chair, but have no right to vote.

c) Churches in association with the WCC can be invited to participate in the work of commissions, advisory groups, and other consultative bodies of the Council as consultants or advisors.

d) Churches in association with the WCC would have the possibility of participating in the work of the WCC as described, but would not be identified with decisions taken or statements issued by the Council.

e) There would be no financial obligation on the part of churches in association with the WCC for the work of the Council, nor would financial support be made available from the Council to such churches to facilitate their participation.

APPENDIX C

EXCERPTS FROM THE FINAL REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMISSION RELATIVE TO MEMBERSHIP ISSUES

VII. Membership and Representation

52. Subsequent to the establishment of the Special Commission the Executive Committee of the WCC set up a separate study group to investigate matters of membership and representation and to make recommendations. This Membership Study Group is composed of both members of the Central Committee and the Special Commission with parity between Orthodox and participants from the other member churches. It has already made interim reports to the Executive Committee and shared these with the Special Commission at its plenary meetings. It will present its final report to the Executive Committee for submission to the Central Committee meeting scheduled for August 2002.

53. All reports of the Membership Study Group have been made available to all members of the Special Commission. The meetings of the Membership Study Group purposely have been scheduled to alternate with the meetings of the Special Commission so that at every stage of the development of the work of the Special Commission, the Commission has been informed of the work of the Membership Study Group and at every stage of the work of the Membership Study Group, the Group has had the benefit of the comments, discussion and advice of the Special Commission.

54. With the encouragement of the Special Commission, major focuses of the Membership Study Group's work were (a) listing theological criteria required of those seeking admission as members of the WCC, (b) formulating new ways of grouping churches for purposes of their representation and participation in the Council, (c) exploring new models of membership including the family model and regional membership, and (d) evaluating new modes of relating to the Council.

55. The Commission proposes to the Membership Study Group that the Membership Study Group include in its recommendations to the

Executive Committee two possibilities for churches wanting to relate to the WCC: (a) member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC, (b) churches in association with the WCC.

Member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC are churches that agree with the Basis of the WCC, confirm their commitment to the purposes and functions of the Council, and conform to the theological and organizational criteria.

Churches in association with the WCC are churches that agree with the Basis of the Council and are accepted for such status. Such churches can send representatives to the Assembly and the Central Committee who can speak with the permission of the chair, but have no right to vote. Such churches can be invited to participate in the work of commissions, advisory groups, and other consultative bodies of the Council as consultants or advisors. Churches applying to be in association with the WCC should state in writing their reasons for requesting this relationship, which reasons must be approved by the Central Committee.

The Commission encourages the Membership Study Group to offer in its final report additional specific language spelling out more particularly the relationship entailed for churches in association with the Council consistent with the plenary discussion of the Special Commission in Järvenpää.

56. The Commission and the Membership Study Group recommend that the existing category of associate member church under Rule I(5)(a)(2) be eliminated in favor of the new category of relationship with the World Council of Churches entitled "churches in association with the World Council of Churches." The Commission and the Membership Study Group recommend that the current category of "associate membership" by virtue of size under Rule I (5)(a)(1) ("small churches") be incorporated into the description of member churches belonging to the fellowship of the World Council of Churches, retaining however the restrictions on participation by small churches. (See attached **Appendix C.)**

57. The Commission and the Membership Study Group propose that new member churches be received at meetings of the Central Committee and not the Assembly. The application for joining the WCC would be presented to one Central Committee meeting, with an intervening period of participation in the work of the Council and interaction with the local fellowship of member churches, and the decision taken on the application at the next subsequent meeting of the Central Committee. *This change in procedure will require a revision of Article II of the Constitution.*

58. Exploring the question of membership, the Commission and the Membership Study Group considered alternatives of either confessional or regional membership, but rejected both as leading to a diminished sense of the constituency's owning the work of the Council. However, the Study Group and the Commission urge the churches to come together locally or confessionally for purposes of membership in the WCC.

59. The Commission and the Membership Study Group propose that churches join in groupings, e.g. geographically, confessionally, or according to other models, in order to make nominations for the Central Committee. Such persons, if elected, would be expected to develop a greater sense of responsibility/accountability to those who nominated them.

60. The Special Commission takes note of the work undertaken by the Membership Study Group and reported to it in interim reports and commends its work, and particularly expresses its agreement with the proposed changes to the Rules, including the theological criteria proposed by the Membership Study Group, acknowledging the Rules and the Constitution may require further modifications. These proposed changes to the Rules are attached to this report as **Appendix C.**

APPENDIX D

MEMBERSHIP STUDY GROUP

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